EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

FREDERICK COUNTY'S FUTURE















MANY PLACES, ONE COMMUNITY

A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR FREDERICK COUNTY, MARYLAND

ADOPTED APRIL 2010



Frederick County Division of Planning

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http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/planning

The 2010 County Comprehensive Plan document is available from the website indicated above or as a CD from the offices of the Division of Planning. The CD includes the complete text document and maps.

Other related reports available on the Planning webpage include:

- Water Resources Element
- Residential Needs and Development Capacity Analysis
- Community Issues Report
- Community Survey Results Report

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INTRODUCTION

Growth Management Initiatives

The Frederick Board of County Commissioners (BoCC) launched its Growth Management Initiative in January 2008 to update the Countywide Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Map, as well as strengthen the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance. Soon after, with guidance from the Division of Planning, the Frederick County Planning Commission began preparation of a draft plan to update the Countywide Comprehensive Plan.

County Comprehensive Plan

This Plan updates the 1998 Countywide Comprehensive Plan, which was primarily a policy document and provided guidance for the subsequent updates of the County's eight region plans. In addition to updating goals, policies, and action recommendations, this Plan initiates a new planning process to develop a countywide land use plan map that consolidates what has been previously identified within the eight separate region plans that have been most recently updated between 1997 and 2008.

The organization of this Plan departs from the traditional list of comprehensive plan elements (environmental features, community facilities, transportation, and land use) that typically define the individual chapters of a plan. Both the format of this Plan as well as the injection of new and revised planning concepts has established this Plan as a new benchmark rather than merely updating the previous 1998 Countywide Plan.

State Planning Mandates

This Plan addresses the recent State mandates from House Bill 1141 and House Bill 2, which require the inclusion of a Water Resources Element, a Priority Preservation Plan, and a Workforce Housing Element within a jurisdictions comprehensive plan. The complete Water Resources Element is available in a separate document and was adopted by the Board of County Commissioners on September 23, 2010.

Comprehensive Zoning Update

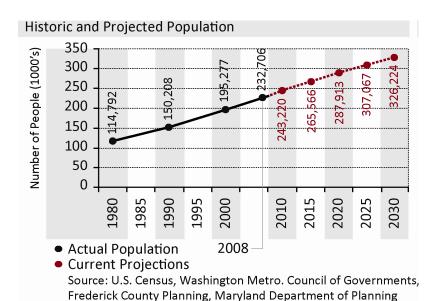
As part of the Plan update the County undertook a countywide comprehensive zoning update that allowed for changes initiated by the County and by property owners. The changes initiated by the County allowed the zoning to be consistent with the land use plan map. An application period allowed for requests by property owners to change the zoning on their properties. The new zoning map was effective with the adoption of the Comprehensive Plan on April 8, 2010.

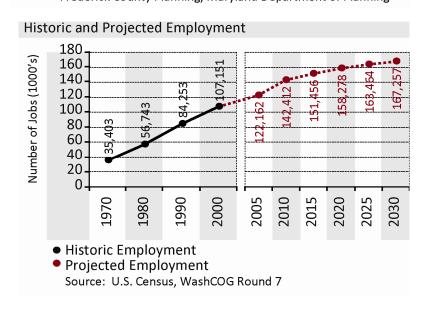
WHAT ARE WE PLANNING FOR?

Understanding the future of Frederick County can only occur with understanding the direction and magnitude of growth taking place in Washington metropolitan region, of which Frederick is a part of. The employment and population growth occurring within the metropolitan region has and will continue to directly influence growth and development within the County. Provided below are the historic and projected growth for the County's employment and population.

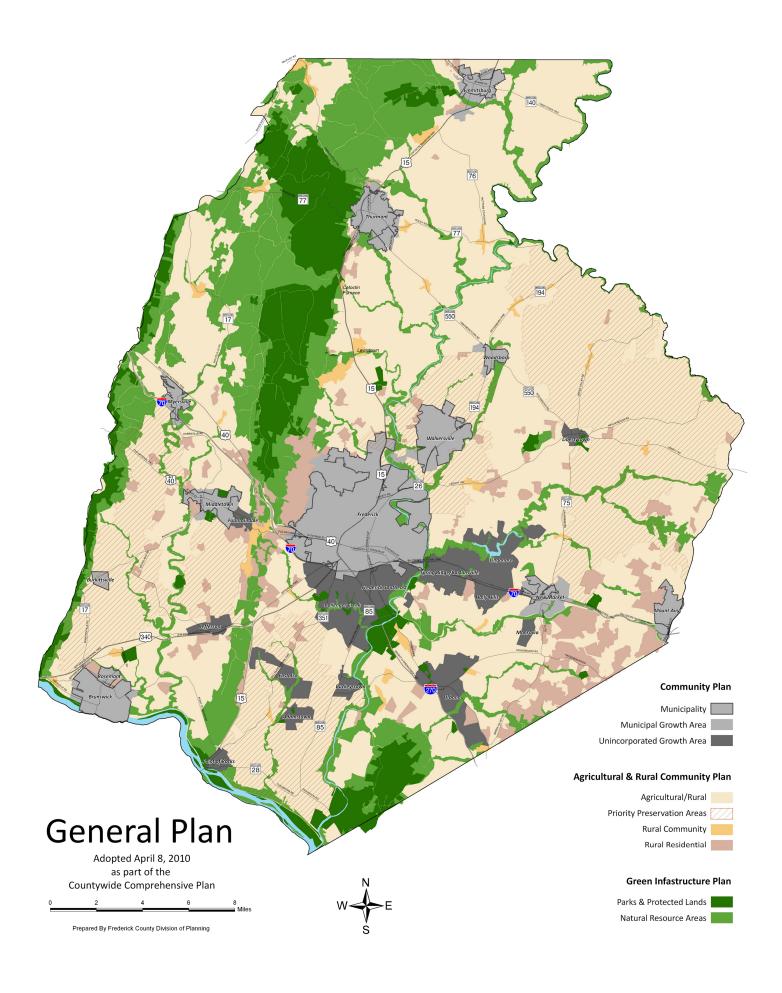
For the 20 years from 2010 to 2030, the County is expected to grow by:

- ■90,900 people
- ■30,200 households
- ■45,000 jobs









GENERAL PLAN COMPONENTS

A new mapping component of this Plan illustrates three general plan components as a way to provide a general version of the traditional land use plan map. This map clearly defines the community growth areas relative to the agricultural lands and the County's natural resource areas.

Agricultural and Rural Communities Plan

This component seeks to emphasize the importance of agriculture and the rural character of the County that is not necessarily in agricultural use. This component includes:

<u>Agricultural/Rural Area</u> – This encompasses a broad area of the County including active agricultural uses, fallow lands, and scattered residences that have been developed from larger farm parcels.

<u>Priority Preservation Area</u> – There are five (5) areas delineated in the County. The focus of these areas is to create larger contiguous areas of preservation easements that also protect the significant prime agricultural soils.

<u>Rural Communities</u> – These are cross road communities located throughout the Agricultural/Rural area and have historically supported the surrounding agricultural community. Where appropriate some of these communities may experience limited growth in the context of supporting the local agricultural community.

Green Infrastructure Plan

This component focuses on the County's network of natural resources and protected lands. This allows for the identification of gaps in the network and as a way to identify linkages within and connecting the community growth areas.

<u>Natural Resource Areas</u> – Delineates the primary environmental features including the mountain areas (encompasses forestland and steep slopes) and major stream corridors.

<u>Parks and Protected Lands</u> – Highlights the state and federal parks and the County's regional parks. Other protected lands include municipal watershed properties and Sugarloaf Mountain, which is privately owned.

Community Plan

This component continues to implement the basic structure of the County's Community Concept first described in the County's 1972 Comprehensive Plan. The Community Concept described a hierarchy of communities, regional, district, and rural that were defined by a number of parameters including population and level of community facilities.

The new Community Concept will continue to carry on the strategies of encouraging compact growth areas and supporting identifiable communities. The primary change from the original Community Concept is the focus on a broader definition of Community Growth Areas (CGA's) rather than a strict hierarchical structure.

<u>Municipal Growth Areas</u> – Most of the County's municipalities continue to provide a logical location for managed growth both within their existing municipal borders and in surrounding lands for future annexation. The General Plan highlights the existing municipal boundary and the future growth area that would be controlled by the municipality through the annexation process.

<u>Unincorporated Growth Area</u> – There are several existing communities under the County's jurisdiction that have served as a foundation for growth. Many have a historic "downtown" core, schools, and water/sewer infrastructure to support additional growth.



HOW WE ARE PLANNING

A departure from the organization of previous County comprehensive plans is the elimination of the reference to a Volume I (Countywide Comprehensive Plan) and a Volume II (Region Plans), which has been used by the County since its 1984 Plan update. For the detailed land use plan mapping, this Plan includes a countywide land use plan map that consolidates what has been previously identified within the eight separate region plans. This Plan establishes a Community Planning process that will allow for plan updates to occur at three levels: Countywide Plan, Community Plans, and Corridor Plans.

Countywide Plan

The Countywide Plan as a whole would be updated on a regular cycle consistent with the State requirement, which is currently every six (6) years. The State requires that each jurisdiction review its comprehensive plan and if necessary revise and update it. The County's process will accommodate amendments to the Countywide Plan between the comprehensive update that would occur every six years. The interim amendments would allow for revisions to: the goals, policies, and actions items; the background data, text; or the maps.

The Plan includes planning region profiles that provide some background data and an overview of the General Plan components for that region. These profiles also include issues and planning concepts from prior region plans in an effort to incorporate them into subsequent community plans. For each region profile are brief descriptions of each Community Growth Area including Municipal Growth Areas and Unincorporated Growth Areas. These descriptions are not meant to serve as a detailed plan but to provide a general overview of the community and to identify any issues that would need to be addressed in a subsequent community plan.

Community Plans

Revisions to the land use plan may also be addressed through updates of individual community growth areas. The plan update process and schedule for Municipal Growth Areas would be determined by the respective municipality and would be coordinated with the County. Once a municipal plan update has progressed to the municipality's elected officials the County would initiate its Countywide Plan amendment process. Any changes to the community growth boundary and/or land use designations adopted as part of the municipal plan update would be reviewed by the County Planning Commission and Board of County Commissioners and adopted as an amendment to the Countywide Plan.

The County will be responsible for preparing updates for community plans for the Unincorporated Growth Areas. A primary purpose for these community plans is to explore design concepts, redevelopment opportunities, and development staging in greater detail than described in the Countywide Plan. The process will be similar to the small area plan process the County has used in previous region plan updates. The result of this will produce a stand alone community plan document that would amend the Countywide Plan land use plan.

This process would also provide an opportunity to conduct a detailed planning effort for the Rural Communities, which while not considered as growth areas may have land use and design issues that could be addressed in a detailed plan for the community.

Community Plan Areas:

Adamstown

Ballenger Creek

Buckeystown

Eastalco

Jefferson

Libertytown

Linganore

Monrovia

Point of Rocks

Spring Ridge/Bartonsville

Urbana

Corridor Plans

Like the Community Plans, the Countywide Plan will be updated through the preparation of Corridor Plans. The purpose of the Corridor Plans will be to focus on smaller areas to address in more detail issues related to design elements, street networks, etc. in addition to the overall land use plan designations and zoning. This process will be especially useful to address the application of redevelopment and transit oriented design concepts. The 'Corridors' are primarily situated along a highway corridor and may either be part of a single growth area or include portions of adjoining growth areas. The specific study area for a Corridor Plan would be determined at the time a plan is initiated.

Corridor Plan Areas:

MD 85/355
MD 85 Employment Corridor
MD 180/Jefferson Tech Park
I 270 Employment Corridor
Old National Pike East
Old National Pike West





PLAN THEMES

This Plan is organized around nine themes. The themes provide an opportunity to focus on significant aspects of the County that have, in previous plans, been given very little attention. Also, a format based on themes creates a more dynamic Plan document where individual themes can stand alone in terms of page numbering to facilitate periodic amendments. The first page of each theme includes an Amendment Status block to document subsequent amendments to the goals/policies/action items, maps, and/or background information for that theme. This allows for the insertion of new theme/chapters in response to either new state requirements or as otherwise identified by the County.

01 Introduction

This Plan builds on 50 years of planning history of the County dating to the County's first land use plan, which was adopted in January 1959. Frederick County has experienced numerous changes and transitions during the past 50 years that have taken the County from its predominantly rural, small town, agricultural roots to a suburbanizing bedroom community, to a maturing county with an established employment base and a prominent community in the City of Frederick. Throughout these transitions Frederick County has remained rooted in its rural and agricultural heritage that continue to support its rural communities, its small but growing towns, and a very dynamic historic downtown in the City of Frederick.

Looking ahead 50 years, Frederick County faces the challenge of maintaining its rural and agricultural heritage and its sense of community while balancing its growing role as an employment center. As a maturing suburban/urban community the County will have opportunities to accommodate and focus growth in a manner that maintains our rural areas and strengthens our communities.

02 Planning Framework and Background

This Plan presents a new structure and organization of the Comprehensive Plan document to provide a clearer framework for its implementation. This chapter provides an overview of the Plan's structure, including vision statements, themes, goals, policies, and action items. The framework of the Plan introduces General Plan Components and mapping that will illustrate community growth areas, green infrastructure, and the agricultural lands.

Further supporting the framework for planning in the County is a description of the County's context in the larger metropolitan region and a summary of the background trends that will influence growth and development in the County over the next 25 years. This chapter concludes with a vision for the County that sets the stage for the story of how Frederick County will meet the future challenges.

03 Conserving Our Natural Resources and Green Infrastructure

The County strives to provide a high quality environment in which to live and work includes the protection and conservation of our Green Infrastructure, our natural resources: forestlands, mountains, streams, rivers, and wetlands. The County's Green Infrastructure concept will help shape the pattern, location, and type of new development in Frederick County and seek opportunities to establish or enhance connections between natural areas.

This chapter attempts to identify, designate and protect key natural resources, sensitive environmental elements, and unique habitats, while still recognizing the economic value of land as a development asset. Included are sections on Green Infrastructure, streams and their buffers, wetlands, floodplains, the Monocacy River, forestlands, steep slopes, habitats of rare or threatened species, and areas of limestone rock.

Goals:

- NR-G-01 Protect natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas in Frederick County.
- NR-G-02 Encourage the use of local, non-polluting, renewable and recycled resources (water, energy, food, material resources).
- NR-G-03 Manage growth and land development in Frederick County in a manner that is in harmony with the conservation and protection of our natural environment.
- NR-G-04 Promote a reduction in per capita consumption of energy in Frederick County.

04 Protecting and Preserving Our Heritage

This chapter of the Comprehensive Plan contains Goals, Policies, and Action Items regarding heritage preservation, including historic properties, scenic and cultural landscapes, and heritage tourism. An overview of the County's history sets the scene for a summary of historic preservation activities. The Historic Preservation Plan, the Historic Preservation Ordinance, the County Register of Historic Places and the Historic Preservation Commission's responsibilities are described. Related initiatives in which the County is involved are the Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area, the Journey Through Hallowed Ground, and the Maryland Historic National Road. In the conclusion of this chapter tools and actions for future expansion of heritage preservation, including the possible inclusion of archeological site protection and preparation of a countywide historic architecture inventory book are described.

Goals:

- HP-G-01 Minimize the impacts of development on the County's historic resources and their setting by establishing compatible land uses.
- HP-G-02 Encourage voluntary protection of historic resources by providing incentives to private property owners.
- HP-G-03 Protect and maintain Frederick County's most important historic structures, archeological, and natural sites, districts, and cultural landscapes.
- HP-G-04 Retain as a working group those elements of the County's farm landscape that contribute to the aesthetics, historic character, and economy of agricultural areas.
- HP-G-05 Maintain the historic character of the County's rural towns and villages.
- HP-G-06 Support the economy of Frederick County by encouraging preservation, rehabilitation, and restoration within context, and promotion of tourism related to historic resources.
- HP-G-07 Foster public education, greater appreciation, and understanding of historic and archeological resources to encourage support for preservation in Frederick County.

05 Preserving Our Agricultural and Rural Community

The goals, policies and action items necessary to plan for a continued vibrant and viable agricultural community are provided for in this chapter. In addition to describing the trends of the agricultural economy this chapter includes the programs that have been instituted to preserve land in Frederick County and a new State Planning requirement for a Priority Preservation Plan. The Priority Preservation Plan contains an implementation strategy;



which will require specific studies or action for its implementation and to reach the County goal of placing 100,000 acres under protective easement by the year 2020.

Plan Highlights

 Identifies five Priority Preservation Areas to focus agricultural preservation efforts.

Goals:

- AG-G-01 Preserve the County's prime agricultural lands for continued production.
- AG-G-02 Encourage the growth of new, and the preservation of existing agricultural industries in Agricultural designated areas in order to support local farm operations.
- AG-G-03 Permanently preserve through various agricultural programs at least 100,000 acres of agricultural land by 2020 and protect a total agricultural base of 200,000 acres as a Rural Reserve to support a diversity of agricultural practices.
- AG-G-04 Maximize state funding and technical resources for a coordinated agricultural land preservation effort.
- AG-G-05 Maintain compatibility and create a regional mass with agricultural preservation activity with adjoining counties.

06 Providing Transportation Choices

An important purpose of this chapter is the consideration of all modes of transportation in addressing the mobility needs of the County. This is a significant departure from previous County plans that focused solely on highways. While this Plan recognizes that automobiles will remain as the most prevalent means of transportation it also emphasizes the need to provide for a more balanced transportation system. This chapter will provide an overview of long range transportation improvements for the following: Highways, Public Transportation, Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities

Plan Highlights

- Advocates Transit Oriented Development in the form of higherdensity mixed use neighborhoods in appropriate locations throughout the County
- Introduces the concept of Travel Demand Management as an alternative mitigation strategy to expansion of road capacity

Goals:

- TR-G-01 Plan a safe, coordinated and multi-modal transportation system on the basis of existing & future development needs, land uses and travel patterns.
- TR-G-02 Integrate transit, pedestrian, bicycling and ADA accessible facilities into the County's existing roadways and communities and the design of new roadways and communities.

- TR-G-03 Maintain and enhance the quality of the transportation system to assure an acceptable level of service, safety and travel conditions for all roadway users.
- TR-G-04 Reduce the need for single occupancy auto use through travel demand management and increasing the share of trips handled by bus; rail; ride-sharing; bicycling and walking.

07 Serving Our Citizens

This chapter provides an overview of the County's services and facilities that serve our citizens. Background information is provided describing the current facilities and projected needs. Since the various facilities and services do not all fit into the same category this chapter is divided into three elements as follows: Community Facilities – schools, parks, library, public safety, and human services, Public Utilities – solid waste management and water/sewer service, Affordable Housing – addresses workforce housing.

Plan Highlights

- Includes a Human Services element
- Lays out siting principles for where to locate community facilities to support community growth areas

Goals:

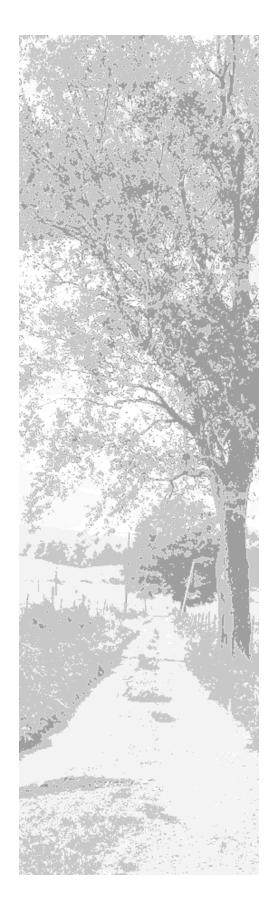
- SC-G-01 Provide for community services and facilities in an efficient and timely manner relative to the pace of growth.
- SC-G-02 Maintain adequacy of public facilities and services relative to existing and projected targeted populations.
- SC-G-03 Locate community services and facilities that maximize accessibility via transit, bicycle, and pedestrian modes of transportation.
- SC-G-04 To the extent feasible, distribute public facilities and services throughout the County on a local, regional, or centralized basis.
- SC-G-05 Ensure that County facilities serve all County residents equally by employing Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards.
- HO-G-01 Achieve a balance of housing choices that meets the needs of Frederick County individuals and families at all income levels.
- HO-G-02 Support opportunities for people to live where they work.
- HO-G-03 Strive to provide those with special needs (elderly, disabled, very low income) safe, sound and sanitary homes.
- HO-G-04 Increase investment in existing neighborhoods and rural communities through revitalization efforts.
- HO-G-05 Utilize infill and redevelopment to increase housing choices throughout the County.

08 Supporting a Diversified Economy

The purpose of this chapter is to highlight the County's economic diversity. The chapter provides background on Frederick County's current economic conditions and its focus for economic development including targeted industries and projected growth industries. The goals, policies and action items provided are in keeping with the County's Economic Development mission to support, retain, foster the growth of existing businesses and to attract new business that enable Frederick County residents to work where they live.

Plan Highlights

• This is a new part of the Comprehensive Plan to better integrate the County's goals and strategies for economic development into the broader focus of the Comprehensive Plan



Goals:

- ED-G-01 Support a sustainable, local economy that creates diverse employment and income opportunities while respecting social and environmental assets.
- ED-G-02 Expand employment growth in targeted industries to ensure the County's fiscal health.
- ED-G-03 Provide sufficient land resources to accommodate long-term economic growth.
- ED-G-04 Sustain a balance between growth in employment and housing.
- ED-G-05 Maintain agriculture as a viable industry in Frederick County.
- ED-G-06 Develop the transportation infrastructure and utilities necessary to support the County's targeted industries (agriculture, biotechnology, advanced technology, and manufacturing) and overall growth in the employment sector, including growth industries of tourism, education services, healthcare services and the retail industry.
- ED-G-07 Redevelop and revitalize the County's existing employment areas.

09 Assessing Our Water Resources

This chapter summarizes the County's Water Resources Plan in order to coordinate growth management and water resources planning efforts in the Comprehensive Plan. The Water Resources Plan primarily addresses the County owned and operated water and wastewater systems although data is included for municipal systems and municipal growth areas. The County's Plan addresses the requirement for a Water Resources Element for the Town of Burkittsville and the Village of Rosemont.

The Water Resources Plan is divided into three sections: Drinking Water Assessment, Wastewater Assessment, and Managing Stormwater and Non-point Source Pollution

Plan Highlights

- New part of the Plan, mandated by the State, addressing the ability of drinking water resources and wastewater treatment to accommodate new development.
- Compares the development potential of the community growth areas with current drinking water and wastewater treatment capacities.

Goals:

- WR-G-01 Maintain a safe and adequate drinking water supply to accommodate the needs of the current population as well as future generations.
- WR-G-02 Protect and enhance the quality of Frederick County's surface waters, ground water resources, and wetlands.
- WR-G-03 Invest in water and sewer infrastructure that will provide adequate treatment capacity and reduce pollutant loading in rivers and streams.
- WR-G-04 Promote coordinated planning between jurisdictions and agencies responsible for drinking water, wastewater, and storm water management.
- WR-G-05 Engage the public in watershed conservation and promote a stewardship ethic.

10 Managing Our Growth

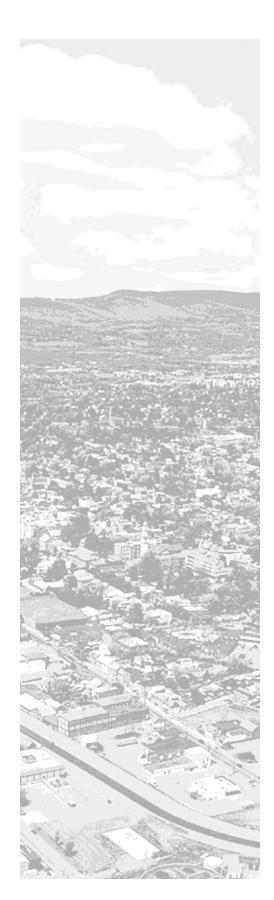
This chapter establishes both the broad planning goals and the targeted land use policies necessary to ensure that Frederick County's neighborhoods and communities can continue to grow and develop in ways that improve the quality of life for all residents. The identification of Community Growth Areas, the institution of Development Staging Principles and Mechanisms, and the definition and mapping of Land Use Designations are each discussed in this chapter presenting a clear and understandable guide for current and future elected officials, citizens, planners, and land developers.

Plan Highlights

- Where will future growth occur? This Plan maintains the Community Concept first established in the County's 1972 Plan that seeks to focus growth in designated Municipal Growth Areas and Unincorporated Growth Areas.
- What form will new growth take? This Plan proposes several Development Principles to support higher densities consistent with Smart Growth, mixed land uses, and a focus on redevelopment opportunities.
- When and at what rate will new growth take place? This Plan introduces a Development Staging concept to address the timing of new development relative to the availability of community services and facilities.
- How will new growth take form in our communities? This question address how new development could be designed.

Goals:

- MG-G-01 Establish plans and policies that consider Frederick County within the context of the metropolitan region.
- MG-G-02 Develop a consensus with municipalities to determine how much new residential growth is desired in municipality-centered Community Growth Areas.
- MG-G-03 Ensure that adequate infrastructure is provided concurrently with development -in order to accommodate long-term land use plans.
- MG-G-04 Reduce non-rural development outside of Community Growth Areas while maintaining opportunities for compatible agricultural support services and uses in the Rural Communities.
- MG-G-05 Manage land use planning and development in a manner that is compatible with the conservation, protection, and enhancement of the County's Green Infrastructure. The design and layout of our communities will draw inspiration from and not suppress or subjugate those natural features that define Frederick County.
- MG-G-06 Increase the proportion and 'per acre' unit density of new residential development occurring within Community Growth Areas while minimizing new residential development outside of the County's Community Growth Areas.
- MG-G-07 Establish as a targeted goal for the development and redevelopment of lands within Community Growth Areas, an average density of 7.5 residential dwellings/acre by the year 2025.
- MG-G-08 Increase the number of properties both vacant and underdeveloped lands -available for employment uses in order to support policies that emphasize the reuse and revitalization of previously developed sites.
- MG-G-09 Emphasize Mixed Use development within Community Growth Areas.
- MG-G-10 Emphasize reinvestment in our growth areas by encouraging infill and redevelopment projects which are compatible with existing neighborhoods and districts.
- MG-G-11 Facilitate the growth management strategy of increasing density in growth areas by employing sound community design principles that enable comfortable, efficient, and accessible communities.
- MG-G-12 Support the desire of residents to live, work, and play in communities whose designs are: inspired by the pattern and layout of traditional and neo- traditional neighborhoods; nurturing of the distinct, locality-inspired character of Frederick County; arranged according to the time-tested model of neighborhoods, districts, and corridors; and, optimized to enable walking, biking, and the use of public transit for personal transportation.



MG-G-13 Employ compact community design that supports the conservation of natural and historic resources, reduces the consumption of energy, and results in the efficient provision and use of community infrastructure.

11 Community and Corridor Plans

This chapter provides an overview of the new planning process proposed by this Plan that focuses subsequent plan updates on the individual community growth areas and on corridors. This chapter includes brief profiles of the traditional planning regions and the Community Growth Areas.

The profiles of the planning regions and the community growth areas within the respective regions are meant to provide general background data and information. While the planning regions will no longer be the basis of subsequent plan updates, it was recognized that profiling the planning regions provide a link to prior region plans and this Countywide Plan. In addition, it provides an opportunity to associate historical demographic and development data as well as interject certain land use issues and opportunities that have been identified in a particular region plan.

Plan Highlights

- Includes profiles and development potential for each of the 22 community growth areas.
- Planning for community growth areas around municipalities will be guided by the municipal planning process and the planning goals of each municipality.
- Establishes a plan update process to maintain consistency between municipal master plans and the County Comprehensive Plan.

Goals:

- CP-G-01 Maintain consistency between municipal comprehensive plans and the County's Comprehensive Plan.
- CP-G-02 Incorporate the Countywide goals and policies from the Comprehensive Plan as part of the individual community and corridor plans.
- CP-G-03 Incorporate community based physical planning elements into the Corridor and Community planning efforts.

12 Implementation

To achieve the goals and realize the vision as set forth in this plan, Frederick County's leaders will need to embrace the policies and make progress toward fulfilling the action items as laid out in the respective chapters. This chapter identifies those action items and assigns a general timeframe for implementation. In addition to the specific action items, this chapter defines overarching or general strategies for implementation that will guide the County in its effort to achieve the vision.

Plan Highlights

 Provides a new "Action Item Implementation Matrix" to reinforce the interrelationship between the chapter themes and to clearly lay out the steps necessary to implement the Plan.



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